

ENSO: Recent Evolution, Current Status and Predictions



Update prepared by:
Climate Prediction Center / NCEP
30 July 2018

Outline

Summary

Recent Evolution and Current Conditions

Oceanic Niño Index (ONI)

Pacific SST Outlook

U.S. Seasonal Precipitation and Temperature Outlooks

Summary

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ENSO Alert System Status: El Niño Watch

ENSO-neutral conditions are present.*

Equatorial sea surface temperatures (SSTs) are near-to-above average across most of the Pacific Ocean.

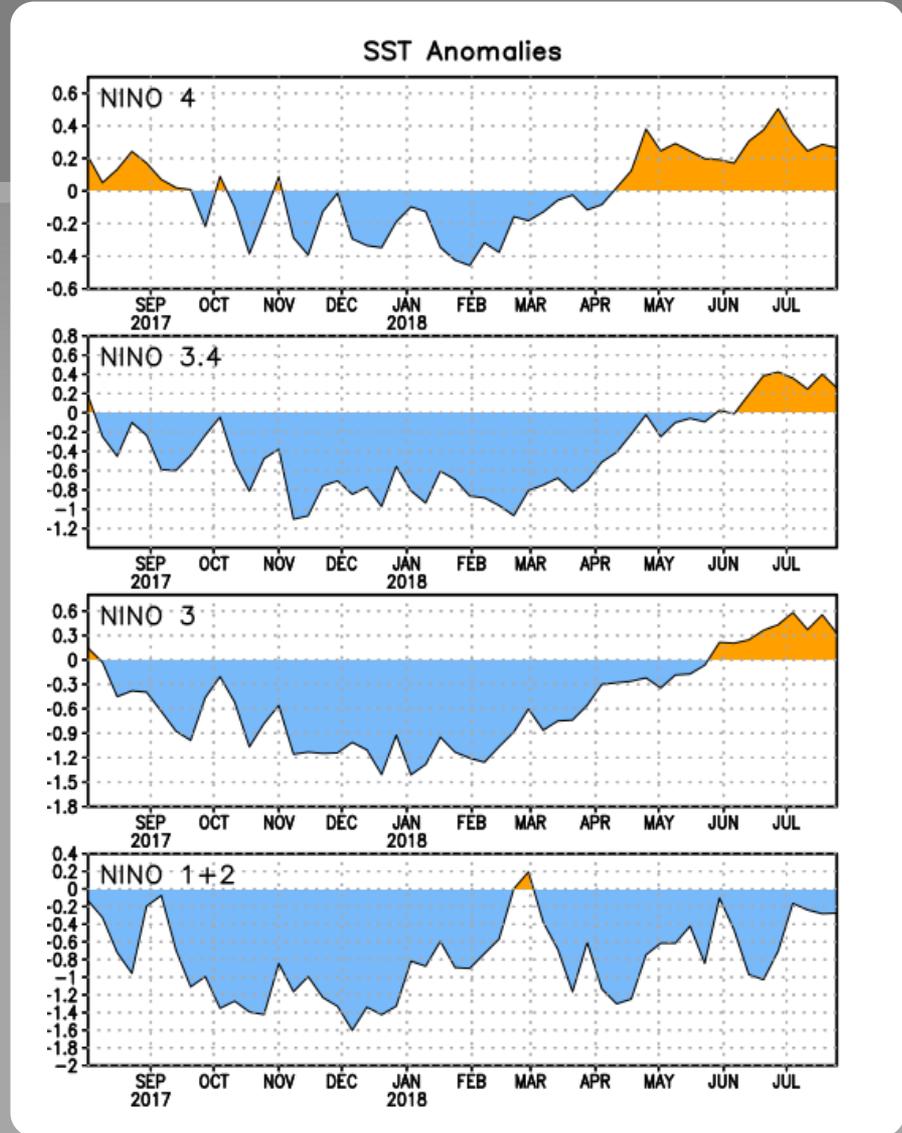
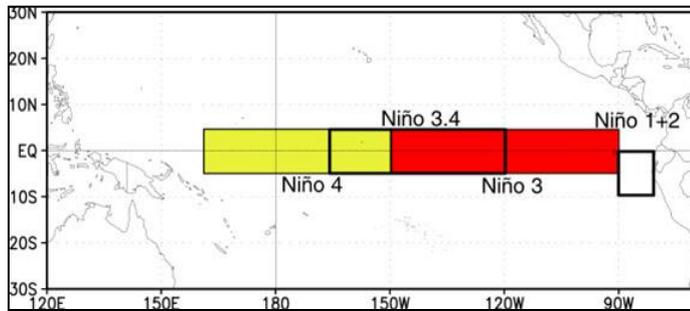
ENSO-neutral is favored through Northern Hemisphere summer 2018, with the chance for El Niño increasing to about 65% during fall, and to about 70% during winter 2018-19.

* Note: These statements are updated once a month (2nd Thursday of each month) in association with the ENSO Diagnostics Discussion, which can be found by clicking [here](#).

Niño Region SST Departures (°C) Recent Evolution

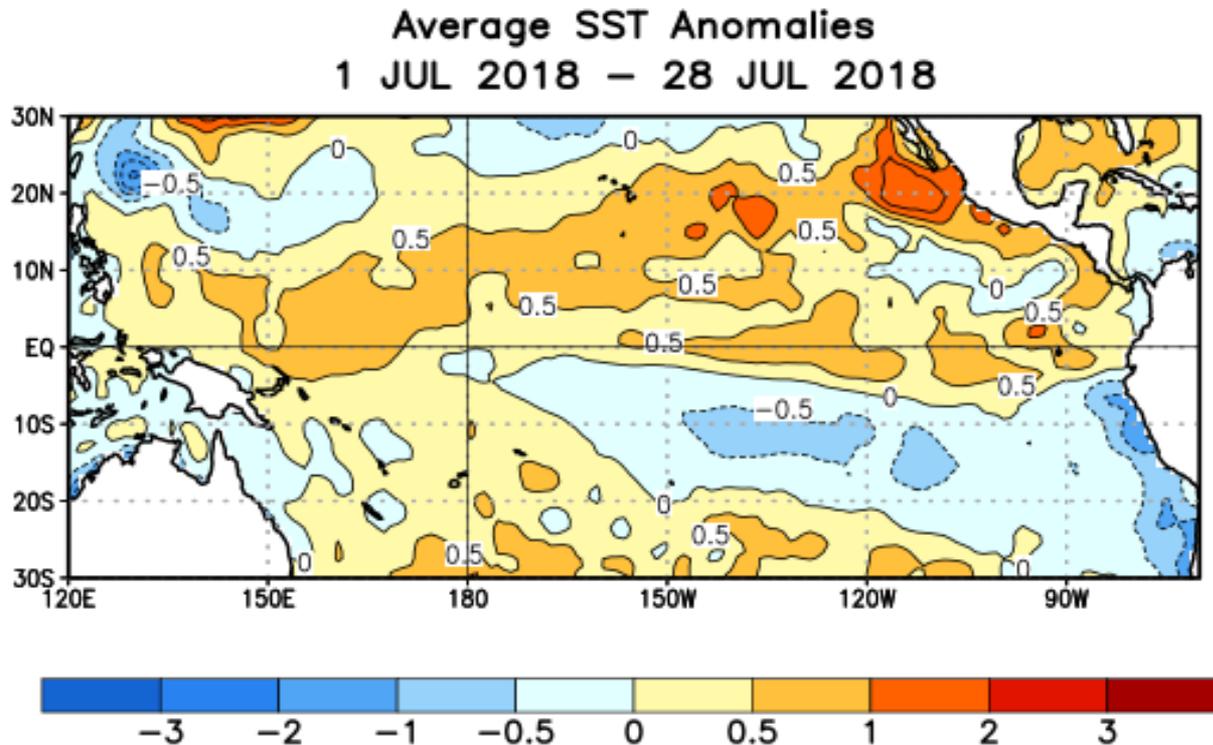
The latest weekly SST departures are:

Niño 4	0.3°C
Niño 3.4	0.3°C
Niño 3	0.3°C
Niño 1+2	-0.3°C



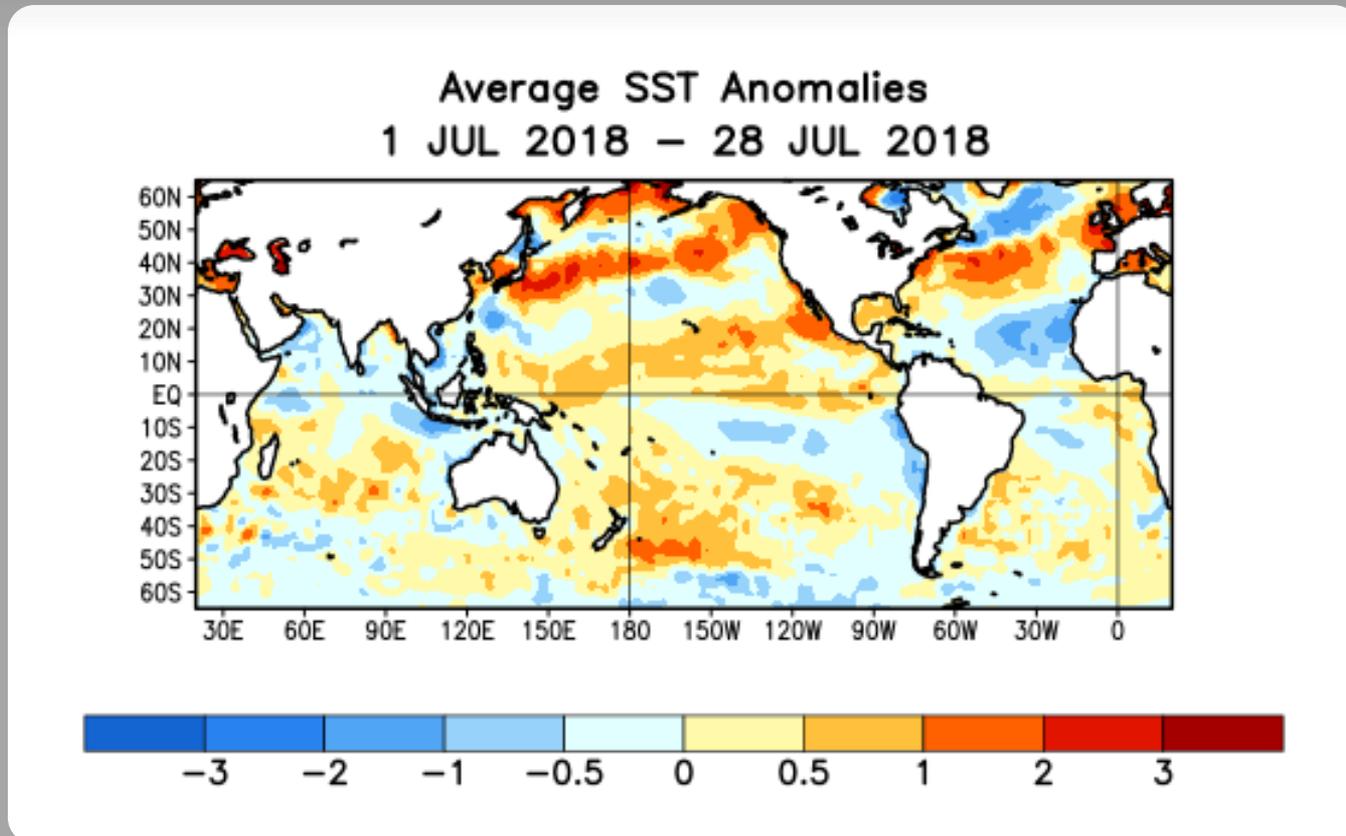
SST Departures ($^{\circ}\text{C}$) in the Tropical Pacific During the Last Four Weeks

During the last four weeks, equatorial SSTs were near-to-above average across most of the Pacific Ocean. SSTs were below average along the South American coast.



Global SST Departures (°C) During the Last Four Weeks

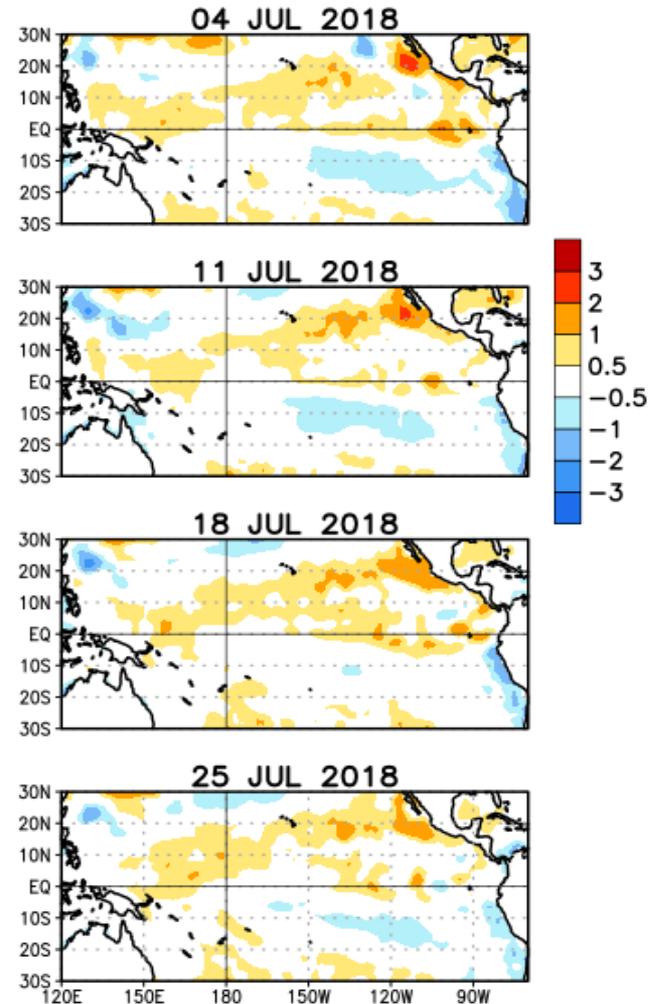
During the last four weeks, equatorial SSTs were above average in parts of the east-central Pacific, western Pacific, and eastern Atlantic Oceans. SSTs were below average in the far eastern Pacific, western Indian Ocean, and near Indonesia.



Weekly SST Departures during the Last Four Weeks

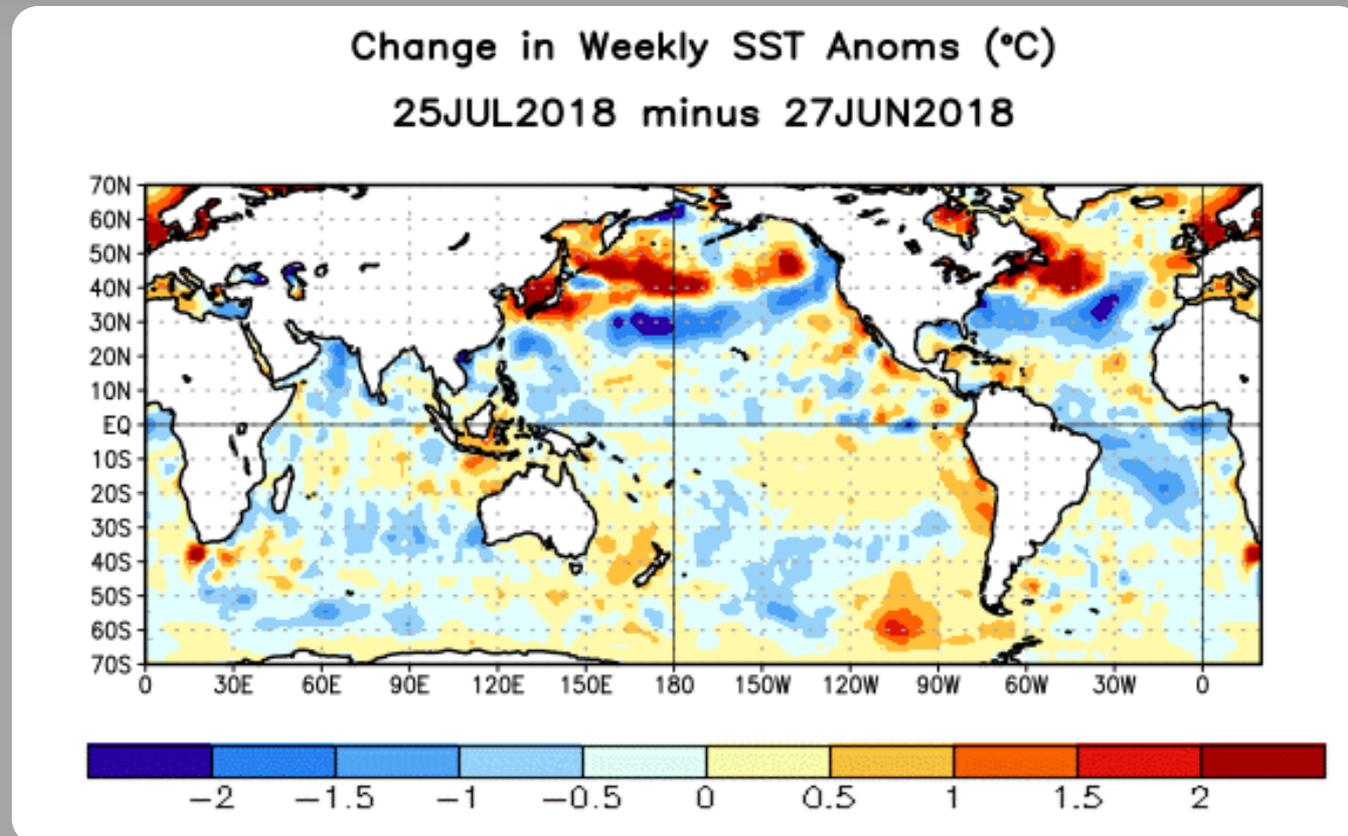
During the last four weeks, above average SSTs have persisted in the east-central equatorial Pacific Ocean. Near-to-below average SSTs have persisted near South America.

Weekly SST Anomalies (DEG C)



Change in Weekly SST Departures over the Last Four Weeks

During the last four weeks, mostly negative changes along the equatorial Pacific were observed.



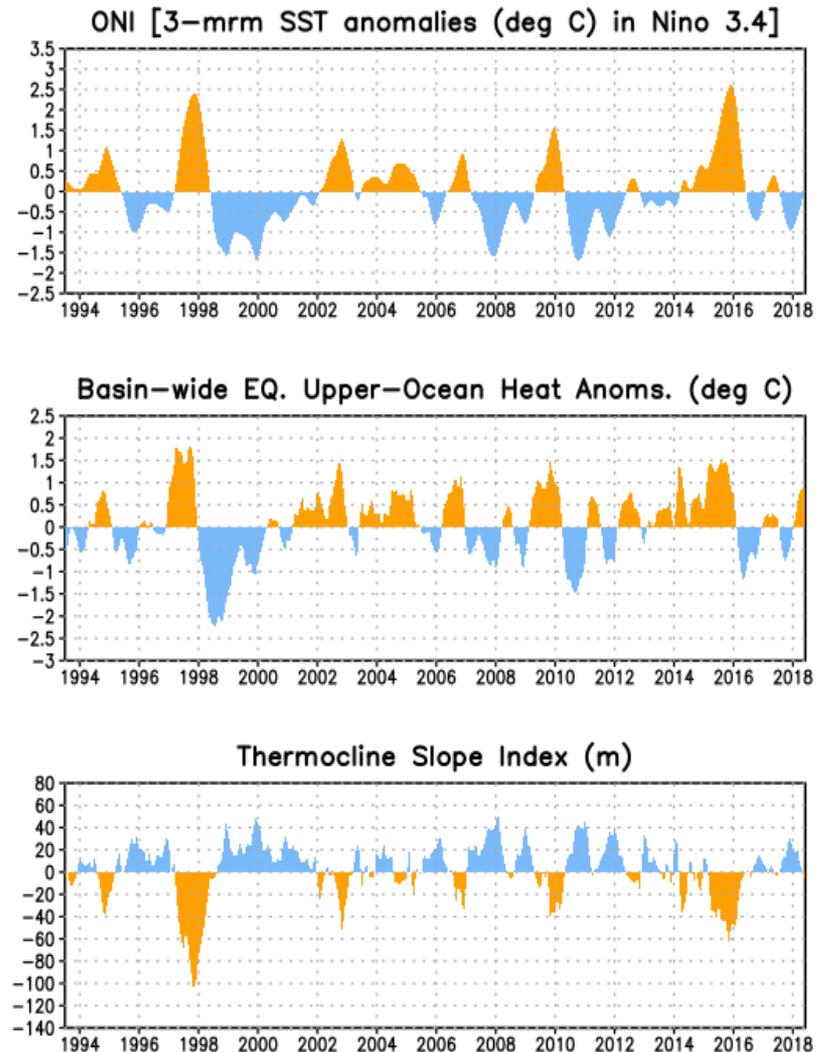
Upper-Ocean Conditions in the Equatorial Pacific

The basin-wide equatorial upper ocean (0-300 m) heat content is greatest prior to and during the early stages of a Pacific warm (El Niño) episode (compare top 2 panels), and least prior to and during the early stages of a cold (La Niña) episode.

The slope of the oceanic thermocline is least (greatest) during warm (cold) episodes.

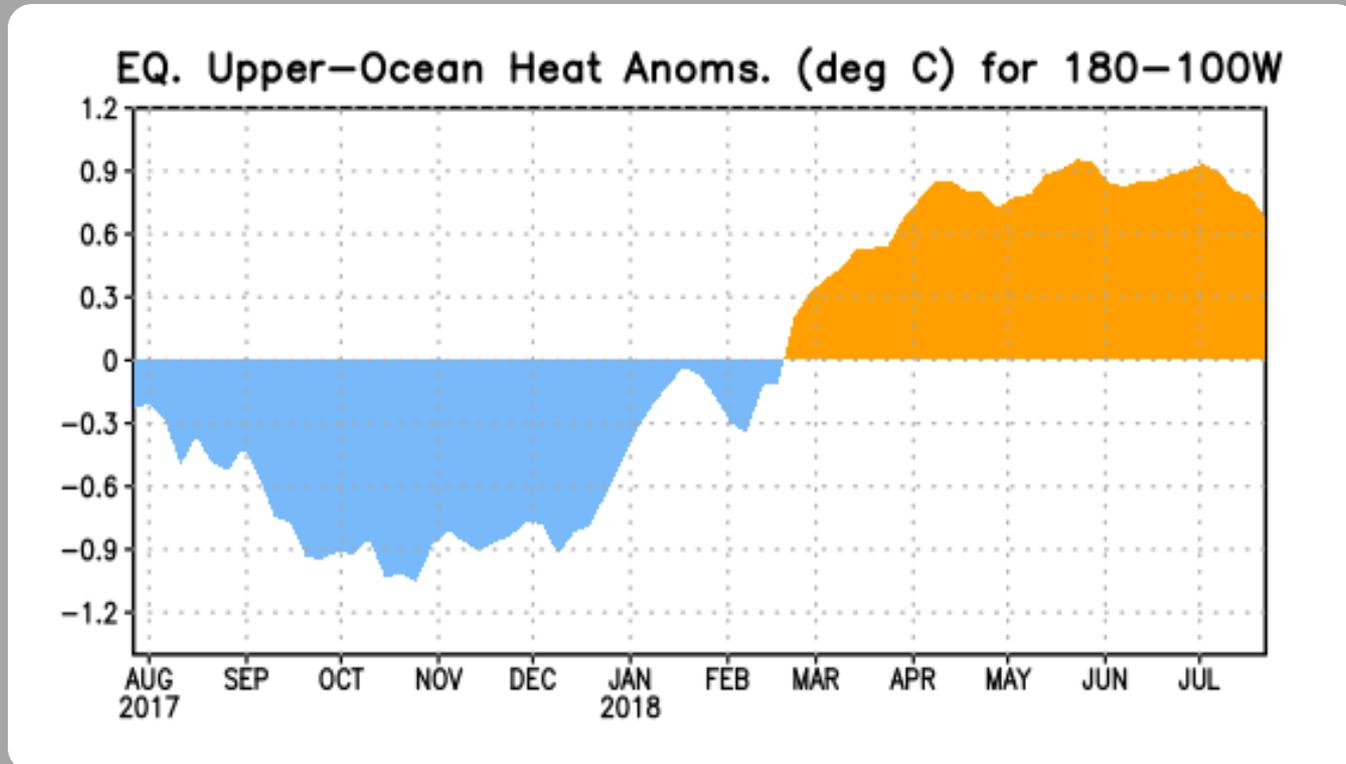
Recent values of the upper-ocean heat anomalies (above average) and thermocline slope index (near average) reflect ENSO-neutral conditions.

The monthly thermocline slope index represents the difference in anomalous depth of the 20°C isotherm between the western Pacific (160°E-150°W) and the eastern Pacific (90°-140°W).



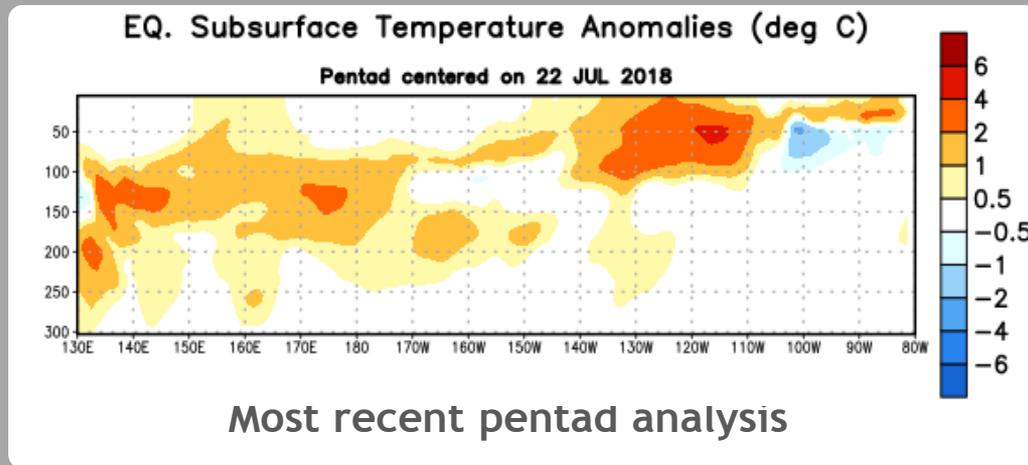
Central and Eastern Pacific Upper-Ocean (0-300 m) Weekly Average Temperature Anomalies

Negative subsurface temperature anomalies lasted from August 2017 to February 2018. Since the end of February, temperature anomalies have increased and remained positive.

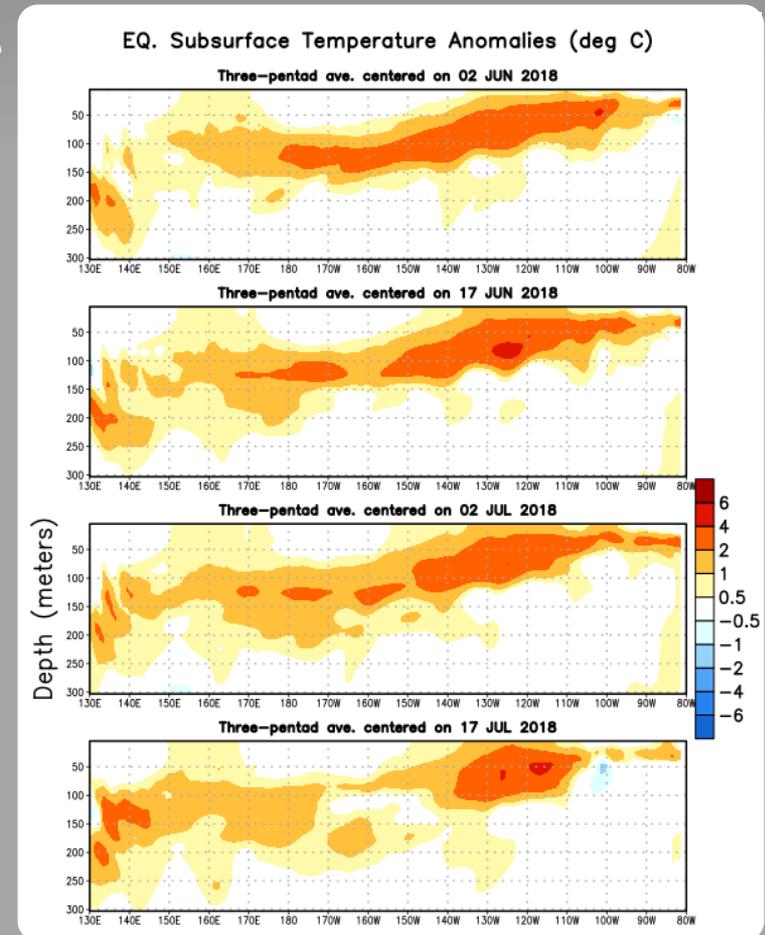


Sub-Surface Temperature Departures in the Equatorial Pacific

In the last two months, positive subsurface temperature anomalies extended to the surface in the western and east-central equatorial Pacific Ocean.



Recently, a small region of negative subsurface temperature anomalies emerged at ~50m depth in the eastern Pacific.

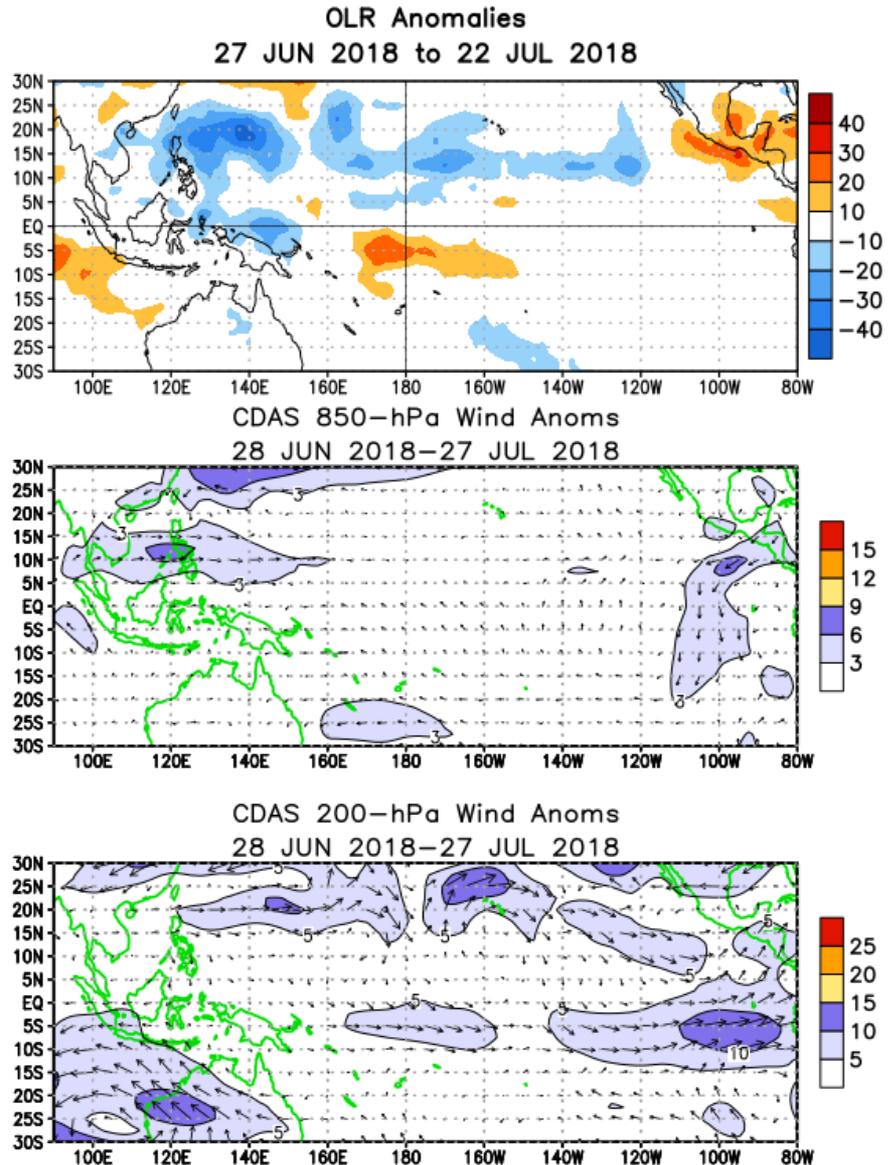


Tropical OLR and Wind Anomalies During the Last 30 Days

Positive OLR anomalies (reduced convection and precipitation) were evident south of the equator near the Date Line, while negative OLR anomalies (enhanced convection and precipitation) were evident north of the equator. Also negative OLR anomalies were observed just north of Papua New Guinea.

Anomalous low-level (850-hPa) cross-equatorial winds were evident over the eastern Pacific Ocean.

Upper-level (200-hPa) westerly winds were evident over the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean and near the Date Line.



Intraseasonal Variability

Intraseasonal variability in the atmosphere (wind and pressure), which is often related to the Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO), can significantly impact surface and subsurface conditions across the Pacific Ocean.

Related to this activity:

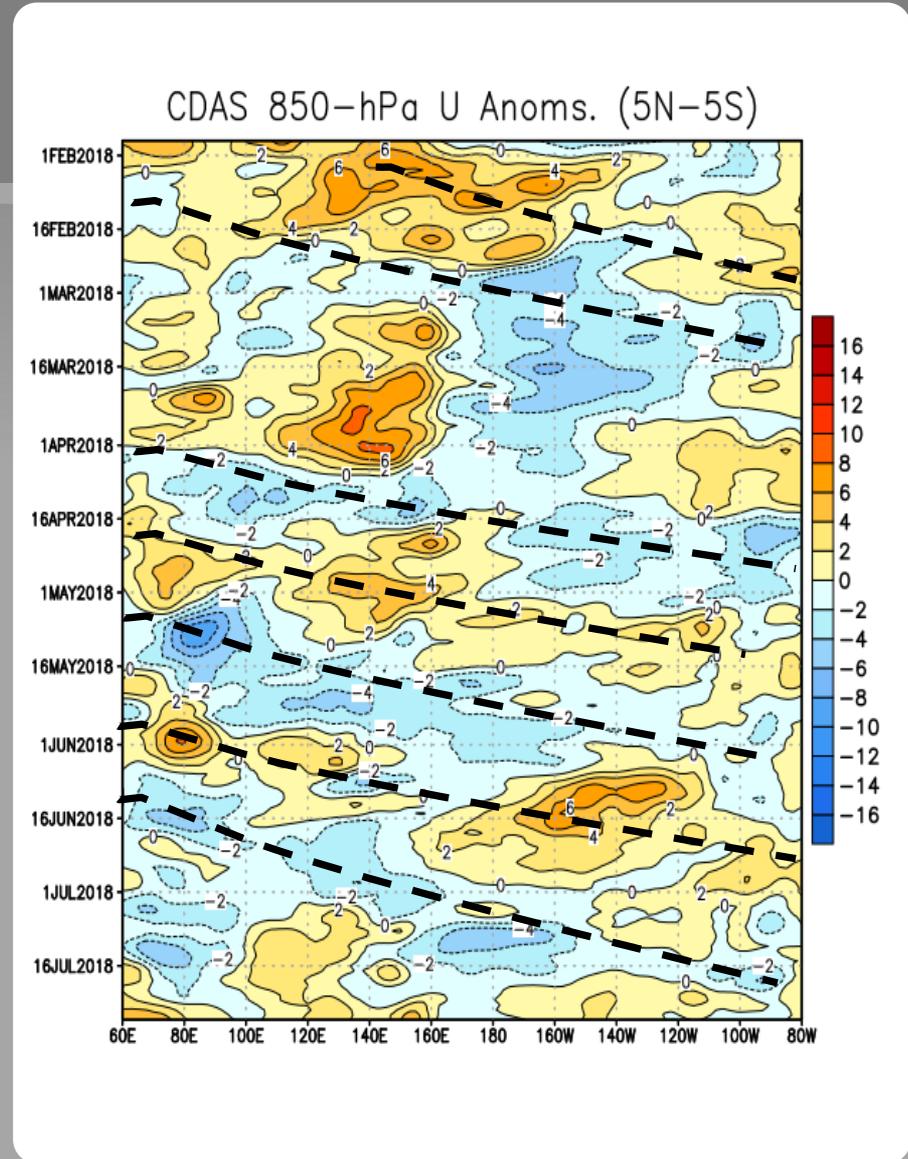
Significant weakening of the low-level easterly winds usually initiates an eastward-propagating oceanic Kelvin wave.

Low-level (850-hPa) Zonal (east-west) Wind Anomalies (m s^{-1})

At times, the Madden Julian Oscillation (MJO) contributed to the eastward propagation of low-level wind anomalies.

During the past week, weak westerly wind anomalies have emerged across much of the equatorial Pacific Ocean.

Westerly Wind Anomalies (orange/red shading)
Easterly Wind Anomalies (blue shading)



Upper-level (200-hPa) Velocity Potential Anomalies

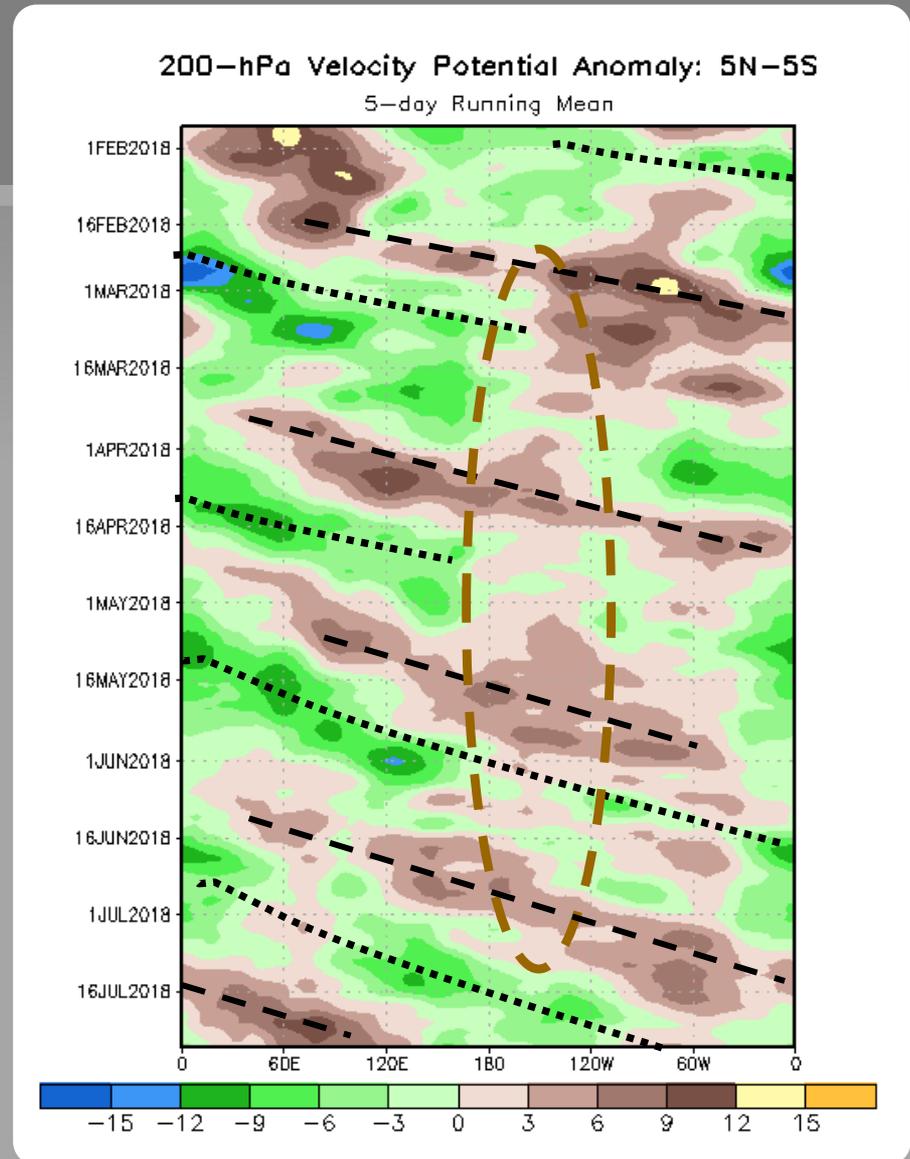
From mid February through June 2018, anomalous upper-level convergence (brown shading) persisted over the central Pacific.

Eastward propagation of regions of upper-level divergence (green shading) and convergence (brown shading) has been evident.

Unfavorable for precipitation (brown shading)

Favorable for precipitation (green shading)

Note: Eastward propagation is not necessarily indicative of the Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO).

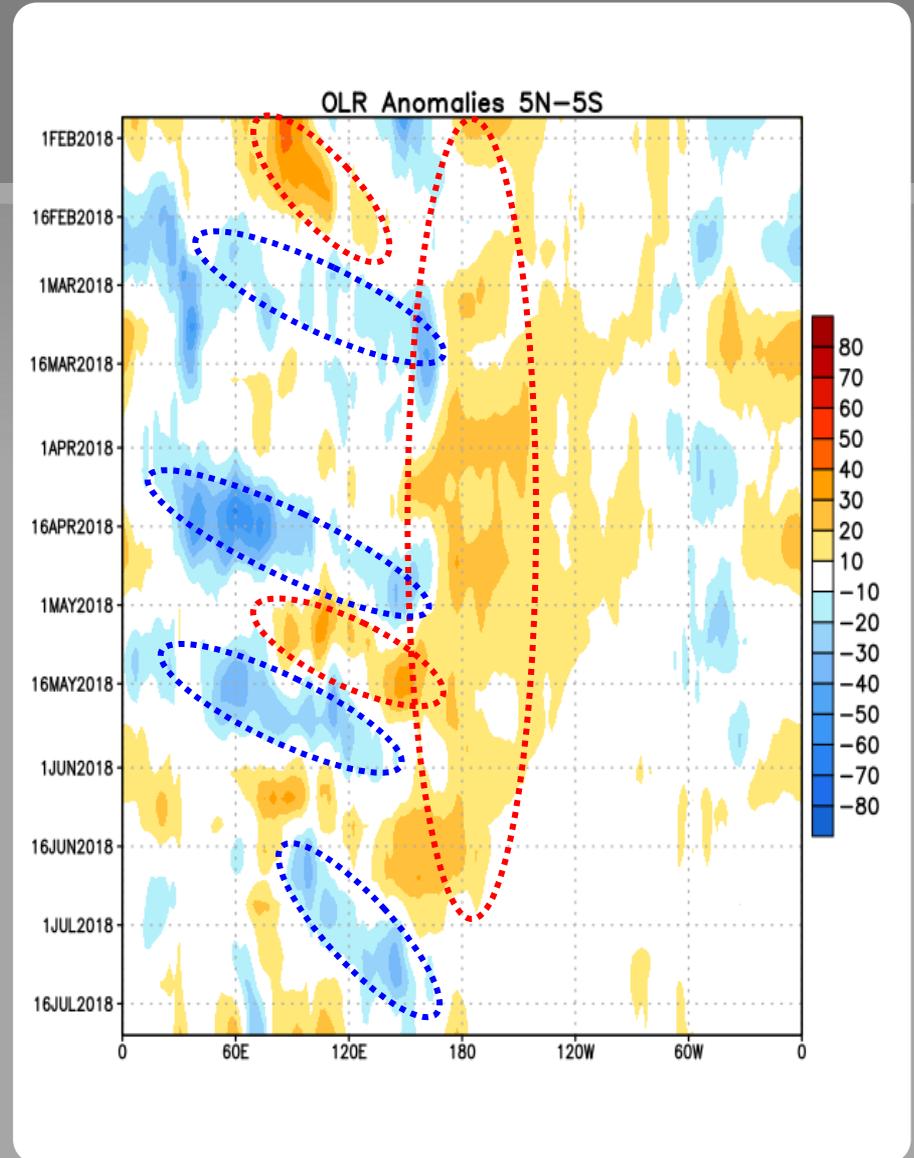


Outgoing Longwave Radiation (OLR) Anomalies

Up through June 2018, positive OLR anomalies persisted over the central Pacific Ocean.

In the last week, positive OLR anomalies were observed over western Indonesia.

Drier-than-average Conditions (orange/red shading)
Wetter-than-average Conditions (blue shading)



Oceanic Niño Index (ONI)

The ONI is based on SST departures from average in the Niño 3.4 region, and is a principal measure for monitoring, assessing, and predicting ENSO.

Defined as the three-month running-mean SST departures in the Niño 3.4 region. Departures are based on a set of improved homogeneous historical SST analyses (Extended Reconstructed SST - ERSST.v5). The SST reconstruction methodology is described in Huang et al., 2017, J. Climate, vol. 30, 8179-8205.)

It is one index that helps to place current events into a historical perspective

NOAA Operational Definitions for El Niño and La Niña

El Niño: characterized by a positive ONI greater than or equal to $+0.5^{\circ}\text{C}$.

La Niña: characterized by a negative ONI less than or equal to -0.5°C .

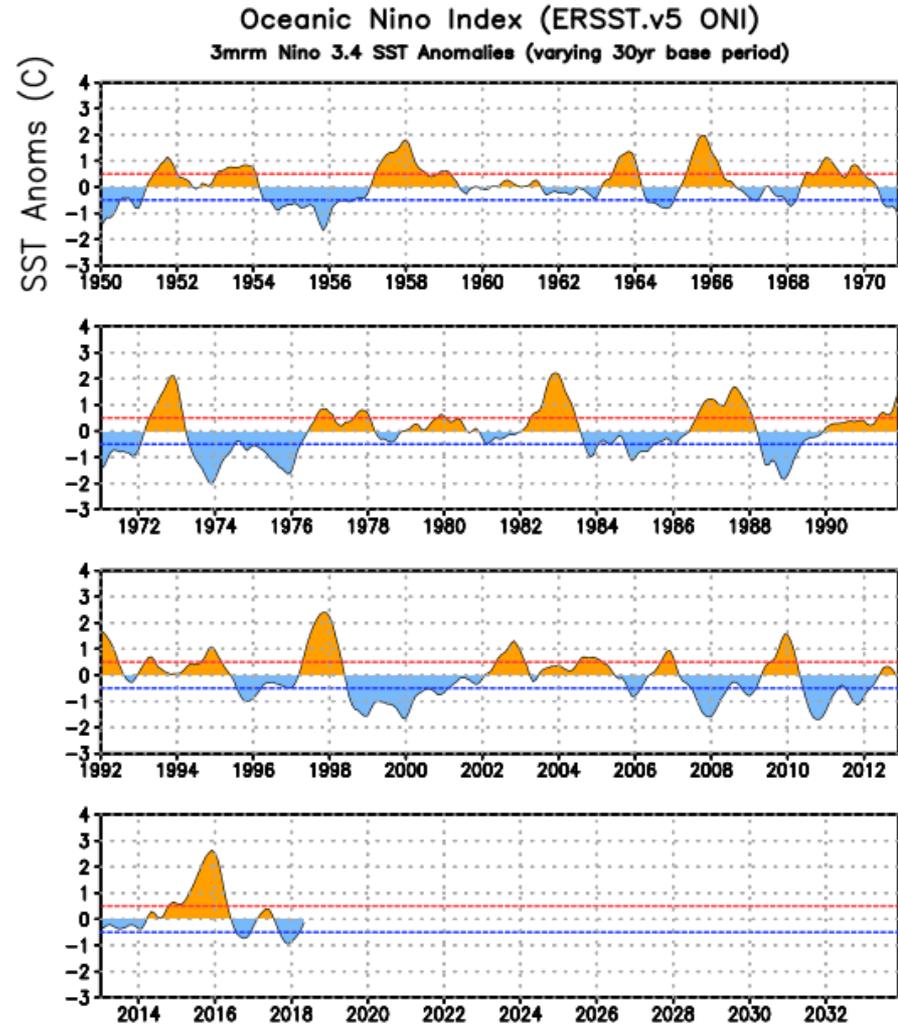
By historical standards, to be classified as a full-fledged El Niño or La Niña episode, these thresholds must be exceeded for a period of at least 5 consecutive overlapping 3-month seasons.

CPC considers El Niño or La Niña conditions to occur when the monthly Niño3.4 OISST departures meet or exceed $\pm 0.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ along with consistent atmospheric features. These anomalies must also be forecasted to persist for 3 consecutive months.

ONI (°C): Evolution since 1950

The most recent ONI value (April - June 2018) is -0.1°C .

El Niño ↑
Neutral
La Niña ↓



Historical El Niño and La Niña Episodes Based on the ONI computed using ERSST.v5

Recent Pacific warm (red) and cold (blue) periods based on a threshold of ± 0.5 °C for the Oceanic Niño Index (ONI) [3 month running mean of ERSST.v5 SST anomalies in the Niño 3.4 region (5N-5S, 120-170W)]. For historical purposes, periods of below and above normal SSTs are colored in blue and red when the threshold is met for a minimum of 5 consecutive over-lapping seasons.

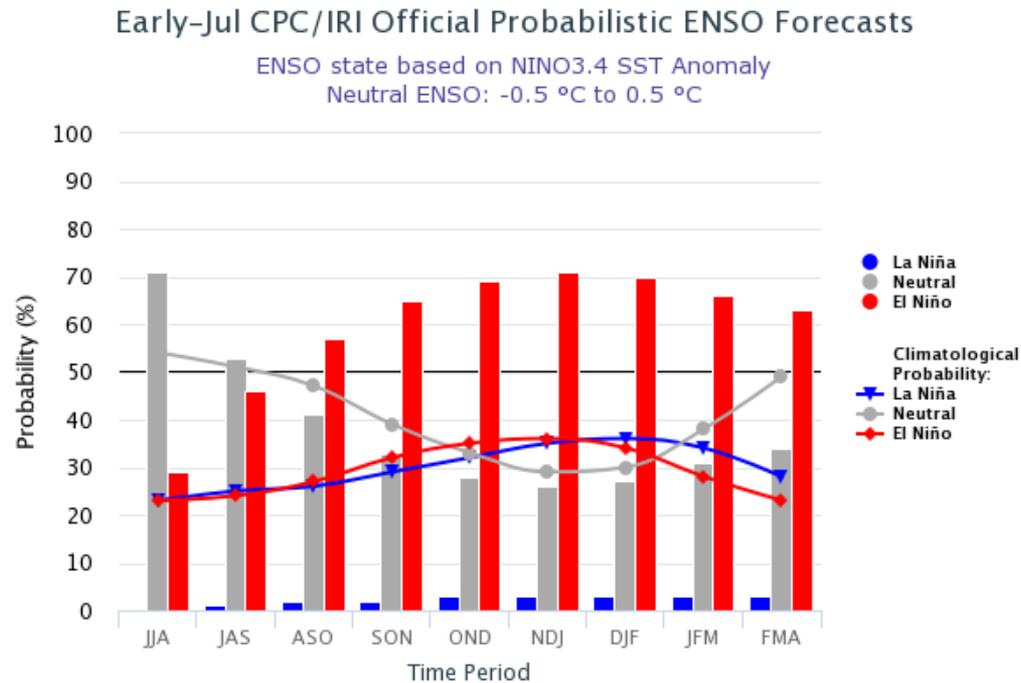
The ONI is one measure of the El Niño-Southern Oscillation, and other indices can confirm whether features consistent with a coupled ocean-atmosphere phenomenon accompanied these periods. The complete table going back to DJF 1950 can be found [here](#).

Year	DJF	JFM	FMA	MAM	AMJ	MJJ	JJA	JAS	ASO	SON	OND	NDJ
2006	-0.8	-0.7	-0.5	-0.3	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.5	0.7	0.9	0.9
2007	0.7	0.3	0.0	-0.2	-0.3	-0.4	-0.5	-0.8	-1.1	-1.4	-1.5	-1.6
2008	-1.6	-1.4	-1.2	-0.9	-0.8	-0.5	-0.4	-0.3	-0.3	-0.4	-0.6	-0.7
2009	-0.8	-0.7	-0.5	-0.2	0.1	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.7	1.0	1.3	1.6
2010	1.5	1.3	0.9	0.4	-0.1	-0.6	-1.0	-1.4	-1.6	-1.7	-1.7	-1.6
2011	-1.4	-1.1	-0.8	-0.6	-0.5	-0.4	-0.5	-0.7	-0.9	-1.1	-1.1	-1.0
2012	-0.8	-0.6	-0.5	-0.4	-0.2	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.0	-0.2
2013	-0.4	-0.3	-0.2	-0.2	-0.3	-0.3	-0.4	-0.4	-0.3	-0.2	-0.2	-0.3
2014	-0.4	-0.4	-0.2	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.7
2015	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.8	1.0	1.2	1.5	1.8	2.1	2.4	2.5	2.6
2016	2.5	2.2	1.7	1.0	0.5	0.0	-0.3	-0.6	-0.7	-0.7	-0.7	-0.6
2017	-0.3	-0.1	0.1	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.2	-0.1	-0.4	-0.7	-0.9	-1.0
2018	-0.9	-0.8	-0.6	-0.4	-0.1							

CPC/IRI Probabilistic ENSO Outlook

Updated: 12 July 2018

ENSO-neutral is favored through July-September 2018, with El Niño favored thereafter. Chances for El Niño are near 70% during Northern Hemisphere winter 2018-19.



IRI/CPC Pacific Niño 3.4 SST Model Outlook

The majority of models predict ENSO-neutral through summer 2018, with El Niño favored by August-October 2018.

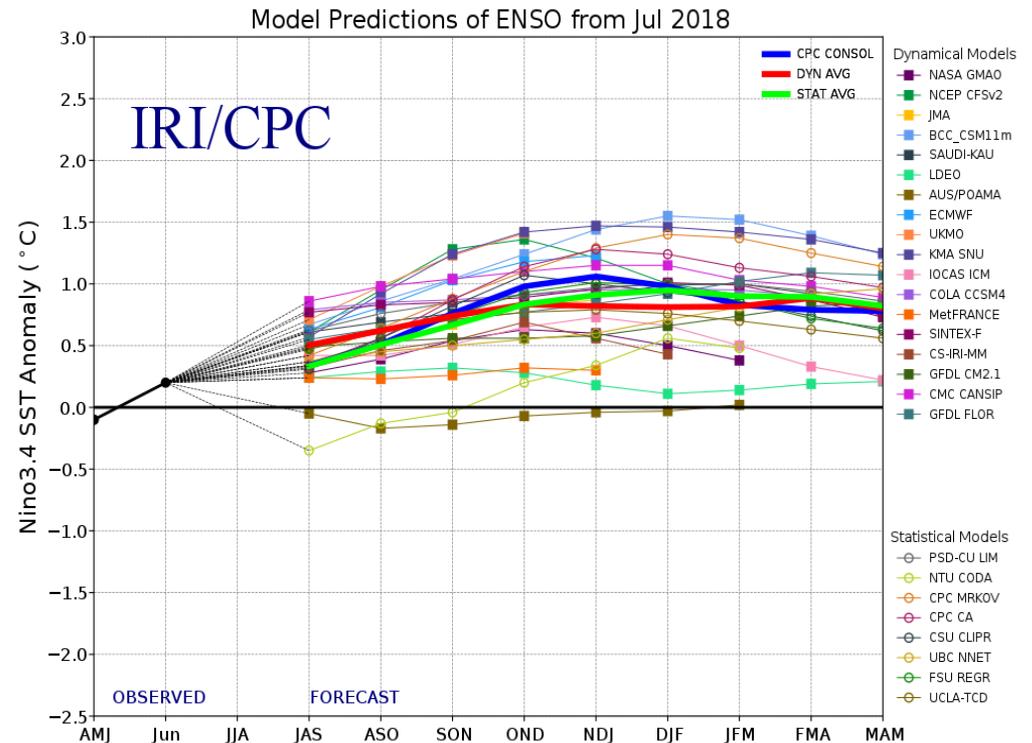


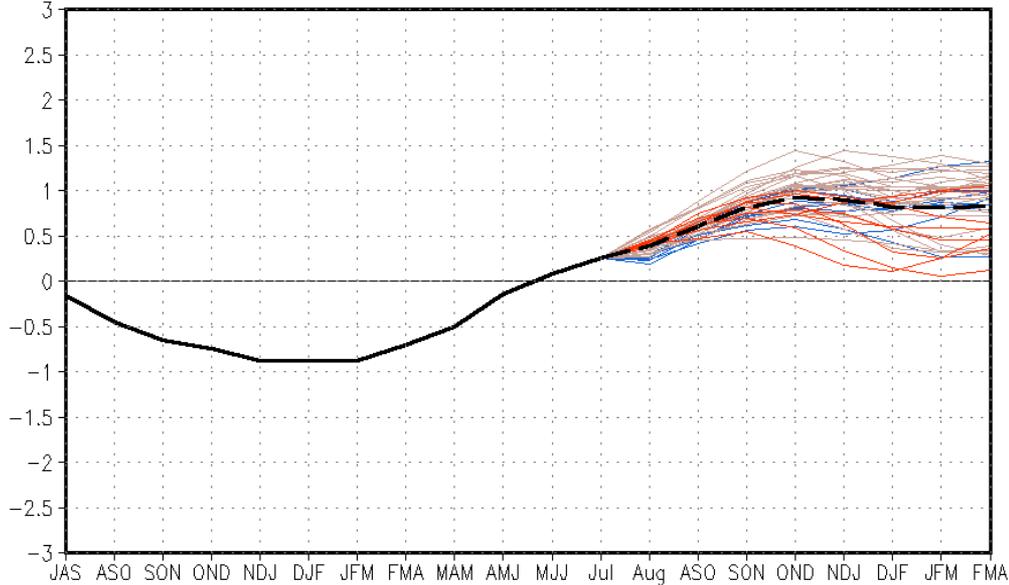
Figure provided by the International Research Institute (IRI) for Climate and Society (updated 19 July 2018).

SST Outlook: NCEP CFS.v2 Forecast (PDF corrected)

Issued: 29 July 2018

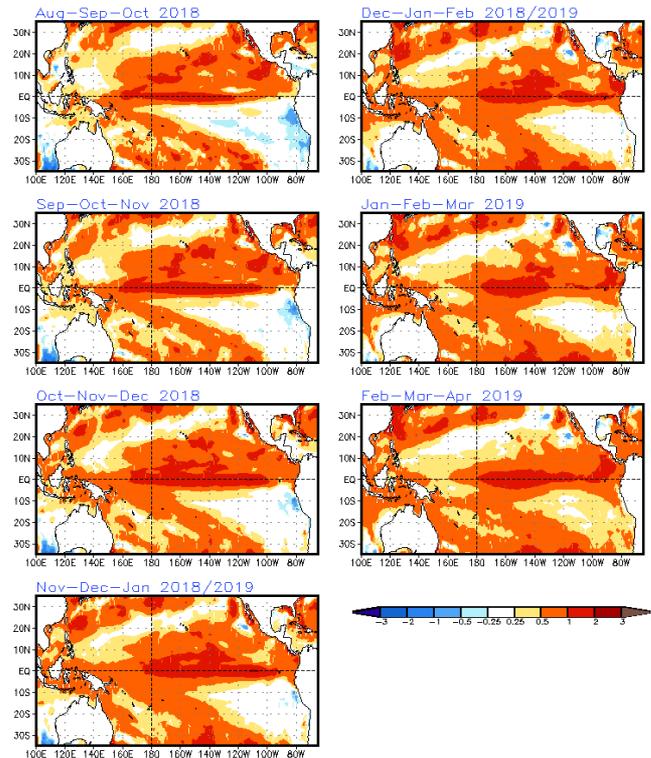
The CFS.v2 ensemble mean (black dashed line) favors El Niño forming during the August-October season and continuing through winter 2018-19.

CFSv2 forecast Nino3.4 SST anomalies (K) (PDF corrected)



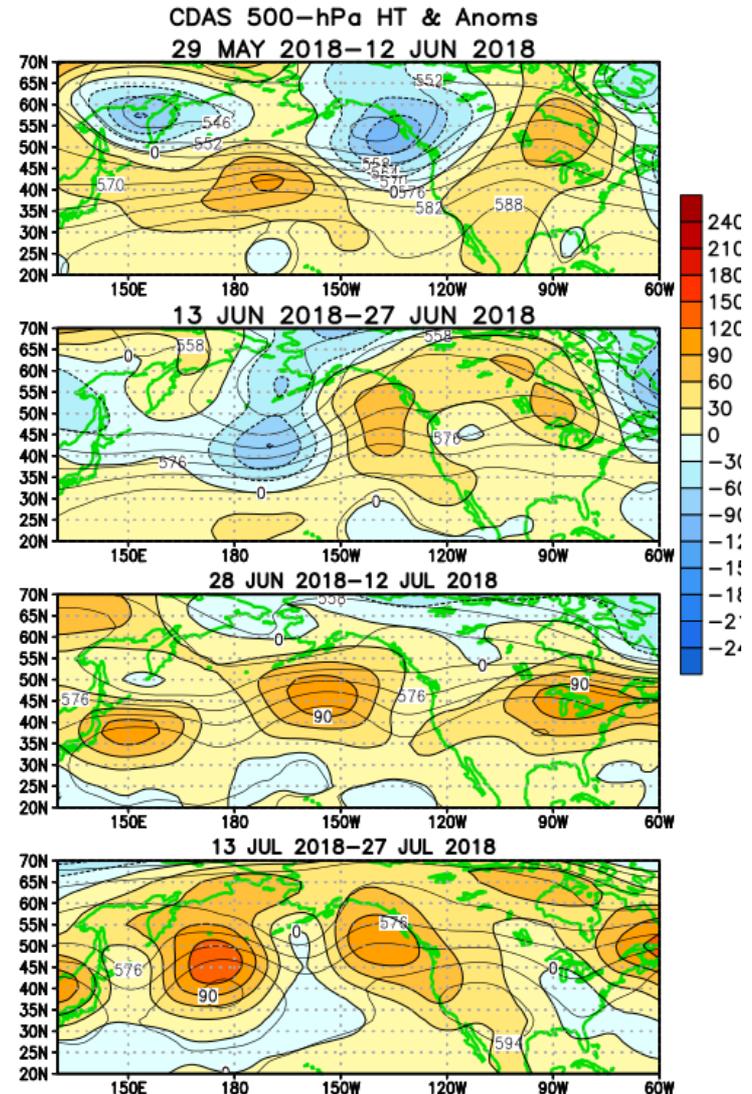
— Latest 8 forecast members
— Earliest 8 forecast members
— Other forecast members
- - - Forecast ensemble mean
— NCDP daily analysis

(Model bias correct base period: 1999–2010; Climatology base period: 1982–2010)



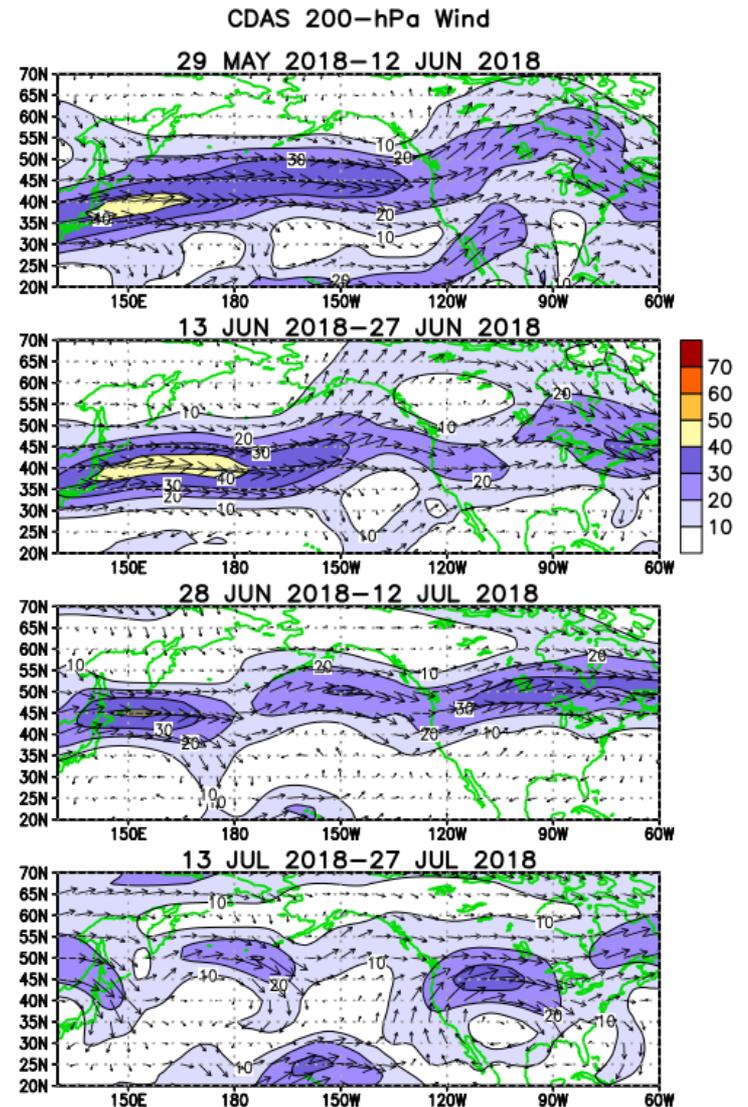
Atmospheric anomalies over the North Pacific and North America During the Last 60 Days

Since late May 2018, anomalous ridging (and above-average temperatures) have prevailed over most of the contiguous United States.



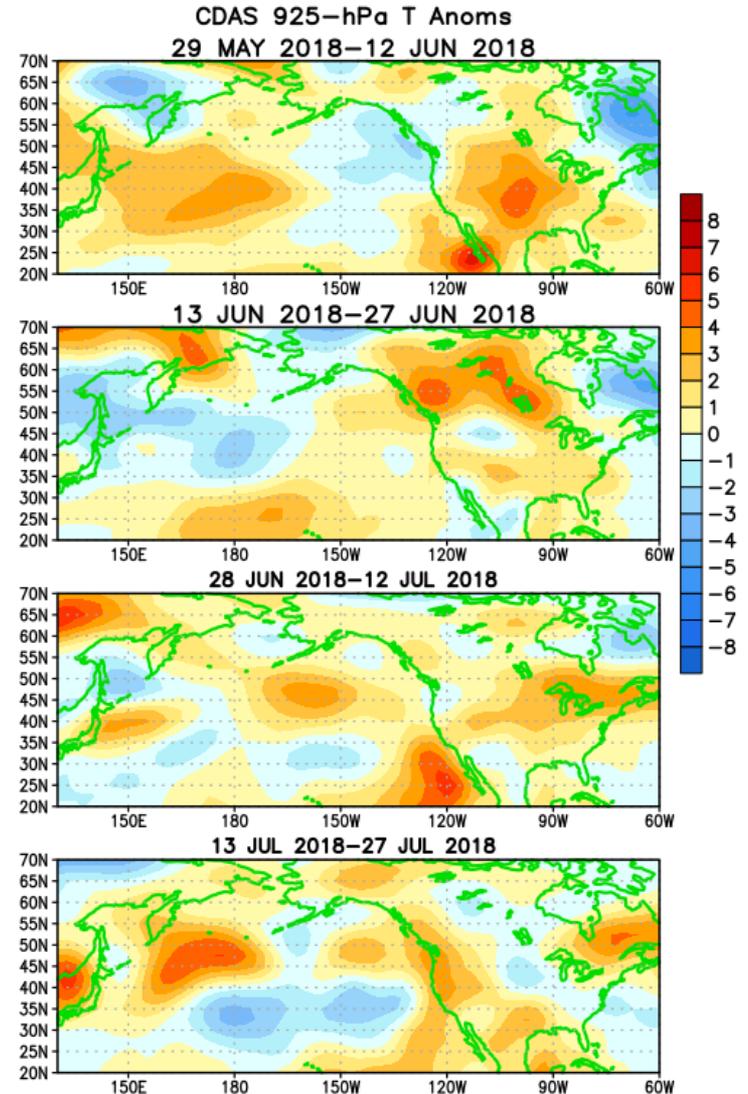
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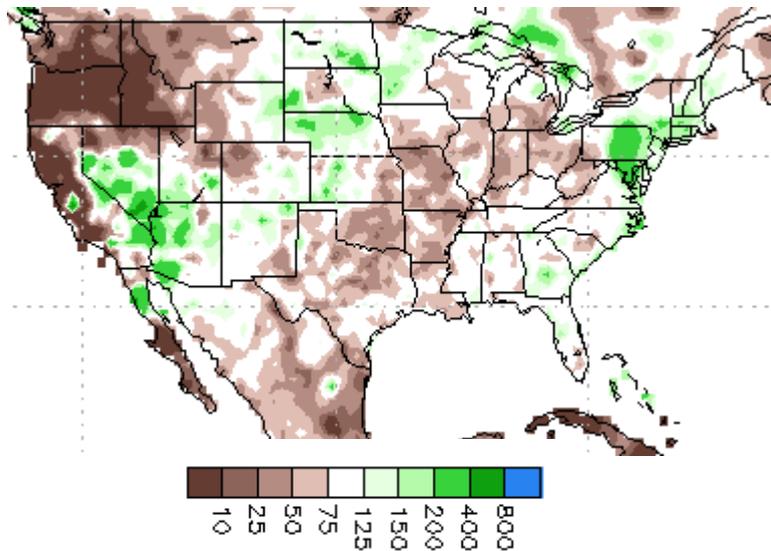
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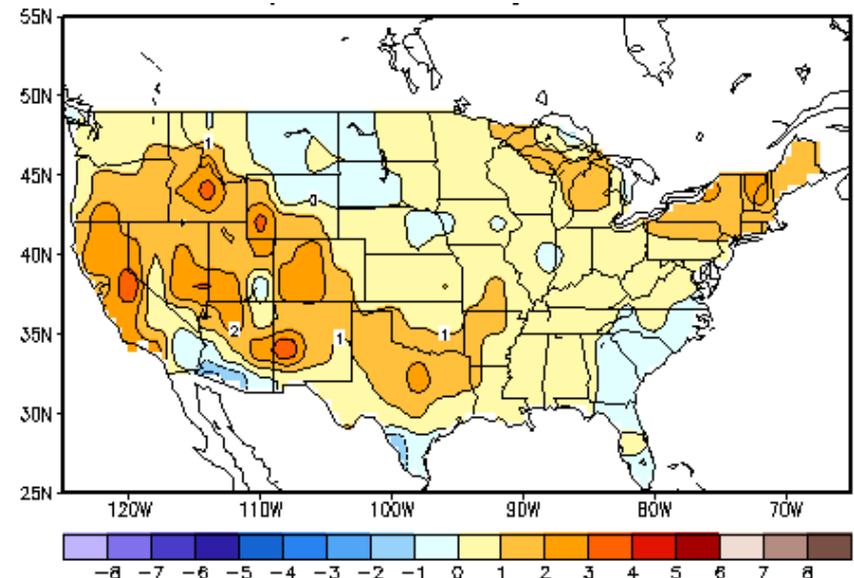
U.S. Temperature and Precipitation Departures During the Last 30 Days

End Date: 28 July 2018

Percent of Average Precipitation



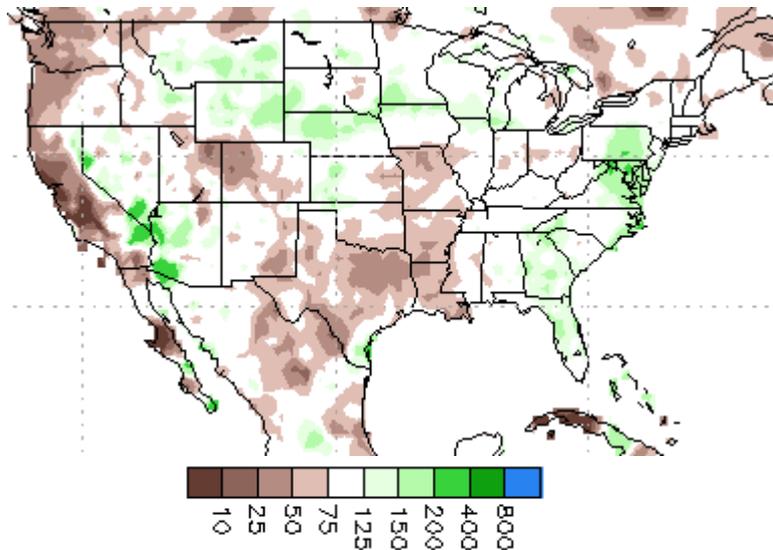
Temperature Departures (degree C)



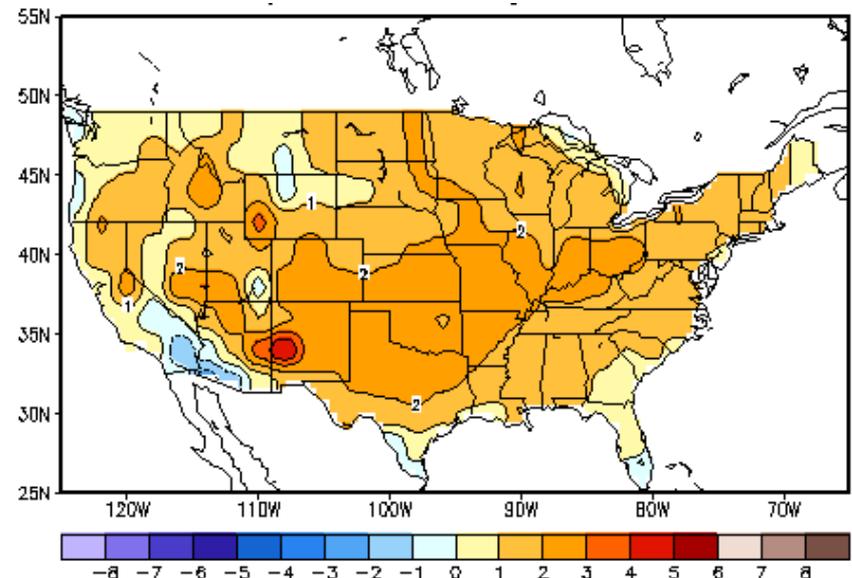
U.S. Temperature and Precipitation Departures During the Last 90 Days

End Date: 28 July 2018

Percent of Average Precipitation



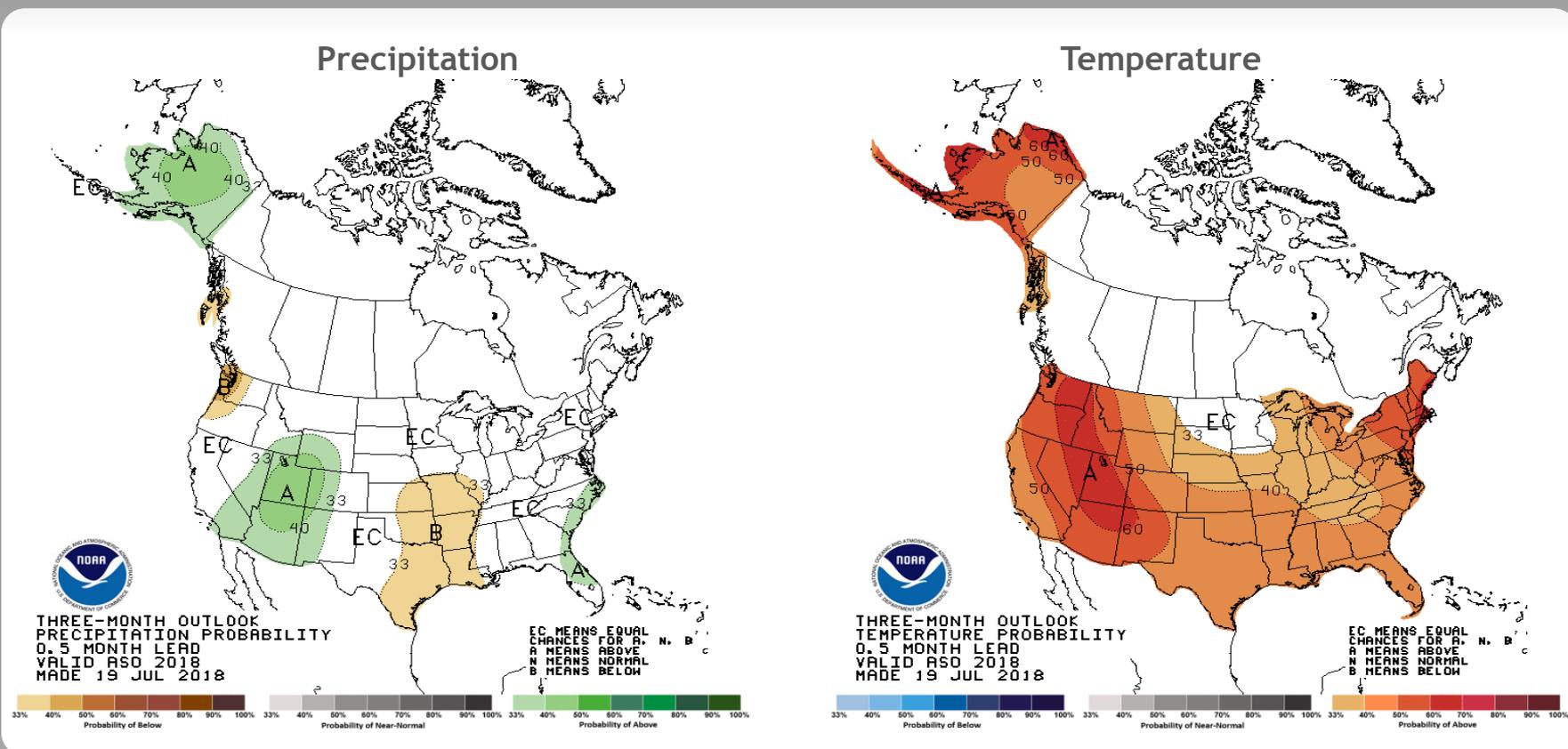
Temperature Departures (degree C)



U. S. Seasonal Outlooks

August - October 2018

The seasonal outlooks combine the effects of long-term trends, soil moisture, and, when appropriate, ENSO.



Summary

ENSO Alert System Status: El Niño Watch

ENSO-neutral conditions are present.*

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ENSO-neutral is favored through Northern Hemisphere summer 2018, with the chance for El Niño increasing to about 65% during fall, and to about 70% during winter 2018-19.

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